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ABSTRACT

The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECT&L) is an independent advisory body authorized by Congress to conduct a comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in elementary-secondary education, including international comparisons, the use of time in and out of school, the use of facilities, year-round professional opportunities for teachers, and the estimated costs of adopting longer school days and years. This report summarizes proceedings of a public hearing held at Cambridge, Massachusetts. A site visit was also made to the Piscataguis Community High School in Guilford, Maine. The participants offered testimonies in regard to the following issues: time; restructuring the school day; aspects of state-level reform (such as standards, time for professional development, and deregulation); school culture; and at-risk programs. Participants included: (1) Harold "Doc" Howe, Senior Lecturer, Emeritus, Harvard University; (2) Ted Sanders, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ohio Department of Education; (3) Susan Fuhrman, Codirector, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Rutgers University; (4) Henry Levin, David Jacks Professor of Higher Education and Director, Accelerated Schools Project, Stanford University; (5) Robert Slavin, Director, Elementary School Programs, Johns Hopkins University; (6) Patricia Graham, President, Spenser Foundation; (7) Theodore Sizer, Chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University; (8) Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, Yale University; and (9) Richard Elmore, Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education. (LMI)

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ED 372 490

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HIGHLIGHTS

of the

EIGHTH PUBLIC HEARING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION ON TIME AND LEARNING

Cambridge, Massachusetts
September 23-24, 1993

EA 025 970

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PREFACE

How can schools help *all* children succeed? How can school and communities best use out-of-school time to enhance and improve the education of children? With more time available for learning, will educators do more of the same or organize learning differently? What do families think of different school calendars? Who decides best how to incorporate technology into new visions of learning organized around systemic change? What impact will changing the time involved in schooling have on how we prepare teachers and how they develop their skills as teachers?

These questions and others challenged the members of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECTL) and its guests at a two-day visit to Cambridge, Massachusetts, on September 23-24, 1993. The total scope of the hearings included the public hearings at the Gutman Library of the Harvard University School of Education in Cambridge, and an earlier site visit on at the Piscataquis Community High School in Guilford, Maine, where Commissioner Norman Higgins served as host.

NECTL is an independent advisory body, authorized by the U.S. Congress in Public Law 102-62, the Education Council Act of 1992. Its members—appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives—are to present a report to Congress and the Secretary of Education by April, 1994. The Commission has been asked to make a comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in elementary and secondary education, including international comparisons, the use of time in- and out-of-school, the use of facilities, year-round professional opportunities for teachers, and the estimated costs of adopting longer school days and longer school years.

The Cambridge public hearings were one of a series of hearings and site-based visits scheduled by the Commission as part of its fact-finding efforts. This Summary has been prepared to respond to numerous public requests for information on the progress of the Commission's work. Copies of the complete testimony of individual witnesses are available from the Commission's office.

Milton Goldberg
Executive Director

ACTIVITIES AND WITNESSES

On September 23-24, 1993, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning held hearings and received testimony from the following individuals:

September 23, 1993

Harold "Doc" Howe
Senior Lecturer, Emeritus
Harvard University

Ted Sanders
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Ohio State Department of Education

Susan Fuhrman, Co-director
Consortium for Policy Research in Education
Eagleton Institute
Rutgers University

Henry Levin
David Jacks Processor of Higher Education and
Director, Accelerated Schools Project
Stanford University

Robert Slavin
Director, Elementary School Programs
Johns Hopkins University

September 24, 1993

Patricia Graham
President, Spenser Foundation

Theodore Sizer
Chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools
Brown University

Edward Zigler
Sterling Professor of Psychology
Yale University

Richard Elmore
Professor of Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Welcome to Cambridge

Cambridge, Massachusetts, home of Harvard University, was a fitting venue for a hearing of the National Education Commission on Time & Learning. It was, after all, under the leadership of president Charles Eliot of Harvard that one of the most influential reports in the history of American education reform had been issued, exactly a century before (1893). The "Committee of Ten," had sounded the first clarion call for all American young people to be "liberally educated" in English, foreign languages, mathematics, history, and science. It was in that spirit, although with a different agenda, that the Commission met to hear from a series of distinguished academics and practitioners.

Although previous hearings had been carefully focused in their approach to issues and sub-issues of time and learning (e.g., costs, impact on professional development, student learning and motivation), the Cambridge hearing was deliberately wide-ranging. Commissioners went to Massachusetts with the intent of "picking the brains" of some of the most experienced and experimentally minded educators in America. They were not disappointed.

A Metaphor

If the venue was apt, the first presenter to the hearing could not have been more so. Harold "Doc" Howe, senior lecturer emeritus at Harvard, is widely recognized for the breadth of his thinking among American educators. He first offered the Commissioners a sage and engaging metaphor. For Howe, the best analogical structure for understanding the issues of time and learning lay in the spider web, which, he noted, depends on several axes for both its strength and stability. "The significant thing," he said, "is that wherever you touch it, you shake the whole web." American education, he observed, also hangs together on a set of axes (e.g., teachers, financial needs, student groupings, learning materials, curriculum, parental involvement, community resources, school governance, time).

Howe suggested that the "most neglected" of those vectors has been time. Curiously, we tend to treat time as fixed, but virtually all time divisions (the day and year being the only exceptions) are "unnatural"— arbitrary variables imposed on human affairs. The fixity of our perspective and routines, he pointed out, makes "shaking the web of time" a potential source of trouble. But sometimes it has to be done, and such a time is now.

The basic problem with school time, Howe said, is its erosion by the addition of so many "extras" to the school day. In particular, we have to build in more time for teachers, to combat the assumption that when they are not standing in front of a classroom, they are "goofing off." "Too much of what happens in the classroom is dull," he said, agreeing with John Goodlad; "what we need is more time to do various kinds of things."

Pointing to group learning activity as a model to combat dullness, Howe said that the instructional model in which teachers provide all the material means that, structurally, kids aren't "engaged," a concept later expanded on by Ted Sizer. Staff development in American schools, Howe said, is "standing in the need of prayer." Instructionally successful schools and districts, he noted, "loosen teachers inside the school day to be more active in thinking of new and effective ways" to teach. As to changing from the 19th century model of the agriculturally based school year, or lengthening the instructional day, Howe saw these as a viable strategies, so long as more energy was put into "changing this relatively dull activity" of schooling.

Speaking to the issue of student assessment and testing, Howe noted that the "subject needs more good research than it has had," particularly the assumption that timed tests are best. (Timed tests were later described by Commissioner Doyle as "artifacts of administrative convenience that bear no relationship to pedagogy or acquired knowledge.") Assessment, Howe said, has to take account of the developmental cycle ("I flunked Algebra I and Latin I, and am proud of it," Howe laughed).

In the following discussion period, Howe also referred to a notion that was later set squarely before the Commissioners by Dr. Robert Slavin, the idea that all students could be successful learners:

> "We get too easily into the box of saying, 'This kid can't do it; therefore, we'll flunk him and he can repeat it next year,' when the real answer to the problem is, 'There's something wrong with the way we're trying to teach him, and if we did it right, he would probably be successful.' "

Howe's view was that by spreading more difficult subjects across longer periods of time, more successful learning could be induced. Students should basically be allowed to have as much time as it took to achieve success; too much schooling amounts to a "Procrustean bed."

Commissioner Walker asked whether the Asian solution of providing more teacher preparation time and fewer (but larger) classes, and the consequent escalation of costs, implied an inescapable trade-off among time, class sizes, and costs. In an affirmative response, Howe pointed to the work some years ago by Lloyd Trump, who espoused the theory that group sizes for instruction should vary with learning requirements. He also pointed out that people can be taught the special skills required to teach large groups, as is done regularly for the faculties at Harvard Business School and Law School, where classes have as many as 90 people.

Commissioner Barrett wondered whether there was any possibility to turning back some of the tasks that have been laid on the schools to social agencies,. "The schools," Howe insisted, "don't have to do it all." There were some possibilities for change. He noted in particular a recent report of the 20th Century Fund on school boards which recommended that every community have dual board

representation—a regular school board and a board concerned about services for children not under the umbrella of the schools. The function of the latter would be to identify gaps in services and eliminate duplications. Responding to a follow-up question from Commissioner Barrett, Howe stated forthrightly that the only way the schools could "pull off" the task of delivering all the services society expects from them is to spend more money, some of which has to be spent to "buy more time."

Responding to a question from Commissioner Byers about the uses of technology in the classroom, Howe's opinion was that most technology is used for drill purposes rather than to improve pedagogy or develop new ideas.

A Visitor from Mars

The launching pad that state superintendent Ted Sanders of Ohio chose for his testimony was a 1972 book by Seymour Sarason, *Why Education Reform Will Fail*. The book's perspective was that of a visitor from Mars, who watches the activity in a typical American school and asks such questions as "Why the pattern of five days in school and two days out of school?" "Why one big person and lots of little people?" "Why do the big people do almost all of the talking and why don't the little people talk to one another very much?" Sarason's point, Sanders said, is that if education reform is to succeed, the rhythms and routines of schooling have to be broken up. That premise, he said, underlay the main points he wanted to make to the Commission.

First, *the significant changes in family patterns (working mothers and single-parent households) in our society have impacted the schools but have not affected schools very much in terms of what they actually do*. In education, we are holding onto cultural assumptions about families that do not reflect the world as it actually is. Every state must now understand time not as a given but as a resource.

Second, *our thinking about schooling has to distinguish between the school day and the instructional day*. We do not make any conscious policy effort to distinguish between the fundamental instructional activities of the school in core curriculum areas and other things that take place during the school day, such as extra-curricular activities, counseling and time out for lunch and study hall. The academic mission of the instructional day is often lost in other activities. Moreover, we rarely view what children do outside the school day as central to the mission of the schools. There is now overwhelming evidence, Sanders argued, of direct benefit from supportive post-instructional day activity.

Third, *it is time to break the envelope of the instructional day, i.e., the 5-6 hour day and the 180 day school year*, because all children are not cast from the same mold; their learning needs are different. The traditional day and year, he said, "are a classic case of displaced priorities," a view

that has been particularly detrimental to at-risk children in Chapter I and Title I programs, which have been focused not on supplemental services but alternative services.

Fourth, *we have to contend successfully with the new demands placed on schooling* by what Sanders called "the new work," i.e., such school courses as safety education, consumer education, AIDS education, metric education, conservation and energy education, bilingual education, and the like. Schools have adapted to these demands either by instituting elective courses or using a pull-out model. In the process, he said, "more has become less....We're going to produce a set of curriculum expectations that no child, even the most gifted, can carry."

Sanders said that he found "little evidence to support an argument for a longer instructional day"; the debate, he said, ought to focus on how instructional time ought to be used. But we should lengthen the school day and year, so long as we distinguish carefully between the two.

Three Aspects of State-Level Reform

Susan Fuhrman, a national expert at the Rutgers University Center for Policy Research in Education on state-level education policy and its development, focused on three topics: (1) the development of standards for students, (2) time for professional development, and (3) deregulation, or waivers, as a way of loosening up restrictions on schools' use of time.

Standards. Fuhrman noted that some 40 states are now in the process of developing some kind of education standards, unfortunately with very little communication among them and little learning via shared experience. There is little questioning about time demands among subject areas and the iterative nature of standards development creates much addition and little subtraction. Additionally, the widespread discussion about a "common core of learning" has produced neither an integrated approach to standards-setting nor effective strategies for dealing with the time crunch. New standards will require more time.

Professional Development. Fuhrman reported that there has been "little movement with regard to extra days of time for staff development." Three states appear to be "ahead of the curve": Missouri sets aside 1% of state education aid for professional development, and both Kentucky and Washington have instituted ten-day staff development programs. But there are also some questionable developments. In Texas, for instance, teachers can receive waivers from up to 15 days of class contact for professional development.

Deregulation and Waivers from Time Requirements. There is considerable historical precedent for school districts using waivers; most recently states have been waiving regulations to spur school improvement. Fuhrman noted, however, that many schools are using waivers to integrate subjects, or engage in multi-age grouping, and other activities that are perfectly allowable under current regulations. In other words, they are, in effect, wasting the waiver. The most

interesting uses of waivers, she said, tend to come from "entrepreneurial- principals." Teachers unions, she testified, tend to be willing to go along with contract releases involving deregulation of time. Local education officials also tend to use deregulation as a way to make statements to taxpayers about "look what the state is making me do," so they can raise local taxes. A number of states, she testified, are trying to move to more streamlined, "performance-based approaches" to the use of time that will eventually render waivers obsolete. But she also noted that this would be more easily said than done.

Round-Robin Discussion. In the ensuing question and discussion period, Howe joined Sanders and Fuhrman. In response to a question from Commissioner Cross about summer and year-round schooling, Howe responded that "it made all the sense in the world." School facilities could be used in the summer without much trouble, he believed. Sanders said that, from his personal experience in New Mexico, the most important advantage of summer schooling was not learning gains ("we couldn't find any") but that the practice "forced rethinking the curriculum and the use of the school day." Fuhrman expressed mixed feelings about expanding time when we're not using time very well now. She favored waivers when they got people to think differently about time; on the other hand, she believed school officials had a responsibility to say how additional time would be used differently. Howe warned Commissioners that change in the schools is "a slow game," citing Head Start as an example; he counseled patience.

Sanders agreed, endorsing a previous comment by Fuhrman that effective pressure for change arises from within the community; when school authorities try to force things, he said, it doesn't work.

In response to Commissioner Higgins's question about what recommendations they would make if they were on the Commission, Howe responded that the more important issue was follow-up, whether there was a plan in place to implement whatever recommendations were made. Sanders said he thought the most important thing the Commission could do was to "actually give permission to school faculties and principals to do things differently with the time they have available," and to "write a report (in the vein of *A Nation at Risk*) that would compel them to action." Fuhrman's suggestion was for reform commissions at all levels to recommend mechanisms for reporting back on reform activity to the public.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shelton on how we could know whether the schools were doing a good job, Sanders replied that we do have data (e.g., from NAEP and other sources) on how well the schools are doing, and he suggested benchmarking state and local efforts against these and against the standards now being developed in various subject areas.

In response to Commissioner Doyle's question about whether people around the country are beginning to think of time as a flexible variable, and whether people were "mapping backward" from

assessment to instruction, Fuhrman said that several, indeed, were, but that they needed help, especially in light of what is happening in the assessment arena. Sanders said that in Ohio, there has been a great deal of "backward mapping." Dr. Goldberg noted that the curriculum specialists to whom the Commissioners had spoken in Washington had not done much thinking about the impact of curricular change on assessment.

Commissioner Walker wondered whether there was any possibility of tying salary scales to skill acquisition by teachers, rather than to hour loads and time-in-grade. Fuhrman thought there was, largely because of the public support for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She also sensed union support, and noted sympathy for the private sector approach, in which employees seeking advancement not only had to take courses, but to demonstrate post-course skill acquisition via some sort of project. Howe responded by commenting on a recent Harvard doctoral dissertation which showed that among the lowest-rated professional development enterprises were courses and conferences—the ones most used by teachers.

The discussion then turned on a question from Commissioner Cross about the difficulties surrounding such terminology as "mastery learning" and "outcome-based education." All were basically in agreement that the educational concepts were sound, but that care in the use of terminology was called for, since those using the terms were not consistent and advocates had not been sufficiently persuasive.

During the course of the afternoon, the Commission heard from two witnesses: Dr. Henry Levin, of the Center for Educational Research at Stanford University, where he is associated with the "Accelerated Schools Project" (ASP); and Dr. Robert Slavin, director of Early and Elementary School Programs at the Center for Research on Effective Schooling at Johns Hopkins, where he is associated with the "Success for All" (SFA) project. Their testimony was heard without interruption so Commissioners could hold a joint discussion with both witnesses at the conclusion of Dr. Slavin's testimony.

Transforming the Culture of Schools

Henry Levin. ASP began in 1986-87 and now has more than 500 elementary schools in 35 states participating in its program. ASP addresses primarily the educational needs of "children in at -risk situations" by doing the opposite of what one would expect:

- Instead of slowing the children down and providing academic remediation, ASP treats all its clients as if they were gifted and talented and speeds their instruction up.
- ASP assumes that the school is the center of expertise, and that to change the performance of children you have to *change the culture and structure of the entire school*, putting children, not teachers or administrators, at the top.

ASP thus operates according to three principles: (1) building unity of purpose into the school; (2) creating a clear system of governance to make informed decisions and to assure accountability; and (3) instituting a teaching/learning philosophy that builds on the strengths of the child, not remediating the child's weaknesses. ASP goes into a community and builds the program in each school by enlisting community and school-based support for basic concepts. Inside the school, *all* employees—including custodial and cafeteria staff—are participants in the structure and purpose of the program.

ASP schools use different approaches to structure time for professional development, Levin said. One is to reallocate existing time on a "triage approach," giving the most professional development time to those teachers whose students are at greatest risk. The time is taken out of instructional hours; "usually faculty meetings are the first sacrifice." Another tool is reorganizing the school schedule. A third approach is finding local businesses to provide financial support for substitutes, to free time for regular teachers.

The easiest solutions, said Levin, are mechanical, e.g., all schools will have an hour-longer day or a 20-day extension onto the school year. However, Levin said, these solutions typically have little impact on student achievement—about a 1% increase in achievement for every 10% increase in available instructional time. Staff development is critical, but reform doesn't happen that way. ASP's experience is that reform happens from commitment to a concept and a process, and by changing the culture and structure of the school as a whole.

Every Child Can Succeed

Robert Slavin. Like ASP, Success for All (SFA) is directed at at-risk elementary children. The program exists in 85 schools in 19 states. Its objective is contained in its name: Every child in a high poverty-area school will experience success, and "no kids will be allowed to fall between the cracks." To accomplish its goal, SFA depends on two ideas: prevention and early intervention.

Prevention means children have the very best instruction in the first place, and that they have everything needed to succeed (including eyeglasses or hearing aids, for example); *early intervention* primarily means one-to-one tutoring, usually from certified teachers, who work with the children in daily 20-minute blocks for 8-week periods, or for as long as the children need it. The SFA curriculum is oriented toward cooperative learning. Children are assessed individually in reading every eight weeks.

An important part of the model is the *family support program*, which draws on such professionals as counselors, social workers, school staff, and others to assist the family in supporting their child's learning. Another part of the support program is teaching parents strategies for working with their children, e.g., literacy activities, homework, and dealing with attendance problems. Each

SFA school has a *full-time facilitator* who works with other teachers to help them implement the program, across the spectrum of the program's activities.

Assessment studies of the school performance of SFA children show that they do substantially better than students in control groups, with the greatest effects among students who start in the lowest 25% of their groups. Students in Baltimore, for example, are more than one grade level ahead of the general population, and the lowest performing students at the beginning of the program are even further ahead. There has also been a substantial reduction in the number of students referred to special education for learning disabilities, and retention has been eliminated as a remediation option. These gains grow over time. An offshoot of SFA, called "Roots and Wings," is seeking to move beyond such basic areas as reading and math and carry the SFA approach into other curricular areas.

Slavin explained student achievement further by using a model called QAIT, which focuses on the elements of Quality, Appropriateness-, Incentive, and Time) as keys to instructional development. He made the point that these factors, used together, work multiplicatively, i.e., if any of them is zero, "Students will not be learning."

In addressing the broad subject of school reform, Slavin insisted that success can come only with a systemic, school by school approach. He suggested that 10 schools in a given state, doubled every year, could achieve significant reform very quickly.

Round-Robin Discussion. Commissioner Doyle opened the discussion by asking both gentlemen three questions: (1) Why they insisted on using credentialed teachers only; why not, he wondered, juniors in college? (2) Did they forfeit their special education income by limiting their special education classes? and (3) Could SFA expand its programs?

Slavin responded by welcoming the idea that others could teach in the program, but cautioned that young children who "are on a greased slope toward special education need somebody who knows what the heck they're doing." The problem of forfeiting special education funds Slavin characterized as "serious"; federal funds only , he said, were forfeited. But the question served to highlight the problem of kids who were performing well, but who were retained in special education because "school systems demand a certain number of kids in order to get the money." As to program expansion, Slavin indicated that was possible. One important requirement for working with a district, however, is an 80% vote in favor of asking SFA to come in. SFA is also trying to build regional training sites, he added. Levin added that ASP schools were pretty much "full inclusion" when it came to special education, and that they required a 90% "yes" vote from teachers to come into a school.

On a question from Commissioner Higgins about whether the programs operated on a traditional school clock and calendar, Slavin replied that SFA did not make any changes; they worked with whatever was in place. Levin replied that he did not have the information for all ASP schools. Many ASP schools are year-round, he said.

Commissioner Cross wondered whether the programs had run into trouble in terms of using a "cooperative learning" model, with it being characterized as "kids teaching kids." Slavin replied that the cooperative learning done through SFA stressed two things: a clear group goal and individual accountability for that goal. "The purpose of the cooperative group is for the kids to review, practice, and do projects together, but ultimately, they're responsible for their own learning."

Asked by Cross where the two programs differed, Slavin replied that SFA was "very prescriptive....we have a template and we expect change very quickly." Levin, said Slavin, believed it was a good investment of time to get a school to consider what they wanted to do, develop a vision, and find the methods they needed to accomplish it. Levin concurred in the characterization, saying, "ours is a long-term philosophy geared to changing systems...It takes five to six years to fully transform a school."

More Metaphors

Patricia Graham, president of the Spenser Foundation and Charles Warren Professor of the History of American Education at Harvard, launched her presentation with a brief mathematics exercise for the Commissioners:

	8760	Hours in a child's life in one year (365 x 24)
—	4380	Hours spent eating and sleeping (12 x 365)
—	1260	Hours spent in school (7 x 180)
—	1460	Hours spent watching television (assume 4 x 365)
	1660	Annual time "typical" child is awake and neither eating, watching television, nor in school

"What," asked Graham, "are the pressures on a child as to how to spend those 1660 hours?"

Her argument was that the indicators relating to the life of children in American society actually mitigate against learning being a priority in this society (as distinct from attendance and diplomas) :

- half of U.S. children spend some portion of their childhood in a single parent home, and family time with children has declined 40% since World War II;

- by 2000, 40% of all children in this country will be children of color, and historically our schools have not served these children well;
- 25% of all children born today, and half of all black children, are born into poverty. The child poverty rate is 20.5%;
- in Western Europe, 85-98% of all children ages 3-5 attend publicly funded early childhood programs. In the U.S. it's 29% of 3-year-olds and 48% of 4 year olds;
- in health, the U.S. leads the world in poverty, single-parent families, being killed before age 25, and consumption of calories. We are #2 after Russia in infant mortality; 20% of U.S. kids have no health insurance coverage. And so on.

How, she wondered, are the schools supposed to do something about all this? "If learning is not valued in this society while school attendance is, it is very difficult for schools to be purveyors of learning."

One metaphor that aptly captures the problem, she said, is that schools are rather like battleships: large and hard to turn around quickly and the bigger the change required, the longer it takes. Ironically, she noted that the Navy no longer makes all-purpose battleships, and wondered why we continue to insist on having all-purpose public education. She concluded her presentation by offering "five general maxims" related to "what needs to happen, what the characteristics of the schools ought to be."

- First, we have to disabuse ourselves of the idea that there was once a "golden age of American education." There never was. We cannot return to the past.
- Second, we need to strike a better balance between attention to curriculum and attention to pedagogy. Traditionally, when children have had trouble in American schools, we have responded by adjusting the curriculum—watering it down. What we need to do is hold the curriculum constant and adjust the way we teach, so that all children can learn.
- Third, we have to give up the juicy "pork chop model" of change in education, in which we remain fixed on policy solutions that will change things once and for all. Instead, we have to adopt the "apple model," in which we opt for less glamorous—but in the end more nutritious—education. Too many pork chops, Graham said, are "half cooked and can kill you." But the apple—something we can do—can still provide nutrition whether it is thoroughly cooked or not.
- Fourth, we need to exchange the common attitude in America education about intelligence ("Either you have it or you don't") for the attitude common in athletics ("We think you have athletic skill that can be dramatically enhanced by practice").
- Fifth, we need to transform our commitment to diplomas and certificates into a commitment to the value of learning for its own sake. This is as much a problem in America today as it was when Richard Hofstadter wrote *Anti-intellectualism in America Life*.

Engagement and Learning

Theodore Sizer, professor at Brown University and chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools, began by raising what he believed to be a fundamental question: How do children learn. "They learn," he said, only when they are engaged," i.e., when they are attentive and focused. The basic question of education, he insisted, is not about delivery of instructional services, but how to engage children and keep them engaged. "Most educational discussions and much educational policy," Sizer said, "do not address these issues. "Most kids find school boring," he said.

The assumption that children will become engaged and will learn if the material is well organized and logically presented, he said, is not true. Students will learn only if they are motivated, and motivation is basically of two kinds: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is what the soldier has; if he does not learn what to do in combat, he can get killed. Intrinsic motivation, which is what learners need, means connecting a child's head and heart. Children, Sizer said, will be motivated, and thus engaged, when they are *known and respected,* and when they value what their attention is directed toward. In too many of American secondary schools, he said, children are not known or respected; they are only categorized and processed.

A large part of the problem, he noted, is that schools are "fundamentally mis-designed...they do not get students into serious, thoughtful habits." .... "Very few of us do serious, imaginative, or intellectual work in 50-minute snippets, with the subject changed the previous hour and the following hour." Adults learn in environments characterized by intensity and persistence, and so should children if we expect to engage them. Learning has to be modeled and oriented to the real world, which few schools value. "Why learn French," he asked, "when the only people in the environment who speak it are paid to do so?....Show me an English teacher who publishes and I will show you kids who write."

School reform cannot be accomplished by changing things obliquely, Sizer said, by changing the tests or the setting, or how the school board is elected, by centralizing or decentralizing. We have to "redirect the way we think about schooling on the basis of common sense and what we know about learning."

Round Robin Discussion with Graham & Sizer: Commissioner Cross began with a question to Graham: Why don't we value learning for its own sake in our society? Graham responded that it was because we did not value academic learning in the past. Our nation's learning needs have primarily been for pragmatic learning; now we are in a position where more and more of our people need "academic learning." Japan, she pointed out, has very few natural resources. It built its post-war wealth by developing its human resources. The United States is just now beginning to pay attention to the importance of its human resources.

We need to remember, concluded Graham, that schools deliver what society wants. If we educate children according to a value that says "We want all kids to learn," that is what we will get.

To a question from Commissioner Barrett about the time implications of their testimony, Sizer responded "Flexibility...high flexibility to adapt to individual needs. Some of the most powerful learning I have seen is in schools where kids are on their own...teachers need a lot of running room."

Commissioner Doyle wondered whether Sizer saw any major shift on the horizon in the way people learn, whether "the schools were becoming progressively less relevant?" Sizer replied affirmatively. "The logical conclusion from state qualification exams or a national examination system is that it is a matter of indifference how you prepare" or how long it takes. "School is going to get messier and messier, and the messier it gets, the better it will be...schools will become very rich versions of public libraries."

Commissioner Schwartz again raised the question of "mastery learning," and what is to be done about the problem of children who are held back and then drop out. Sizer replied that when the whole culture of the school reinforces the concept, as in the Central Park East and University Heights secondary schools in New York, kids stick it out; they don't drop out. "It takes changing the culture of the school," he said, a point with which Graham agreed wholeheartedly.

Dr. Goldberg raised another question about the future of American education: If the presenters believed that decisions about changes in school governance would not make much difference, then would the difference have to come from efforts made by such people as Slavin and Levin? "Willy-nilly," Sizer replied, "education is a street-level activity. The most important decisions are between kids and teachers. It can't be done from the top down."

A Developmental Perspective

The testimony of Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology at Yale, sought to broaden the perspective to include the total developmental context in which we raise our children. If you want to achieve optimal development in children, he said, you have to impact four systems: the family, the health system, the schools, and child care. These four systems, he pointed out, are in an interactive, synergistic relationship in American society. The kind of motivation Sizer was talking about, Zigler said, begins at birth.

Echoing Graham, Zigler said that the two biggest demographic changes in American society in the last generation have been the increase in the number of women working outside the home (by the year 2010, about 80% of all mothers will be employed outside the home) and the rise in the number of single parent families. These changes have made child care a critical issue, and all the

more critical because recent reports are that some 70% of all child care centers in the country are of poor quality.

School of the 21st Century. "I envisage a new school," Zigler said, which follows France, Italy, and other European countries, in which children start at age three, when we know they are ready for group experiences. (Some 85% of French children are in some preschool/daycare arrangement by age two, he said.)

In the school of the 21st century, the following conditions might exist, Zigler said:

- the length of the school day would match the length of the work day of the parents;
- we would make use of the roughly $2 trillion we have invested in school buildings and keep them open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for pre- and after school care, up to age 12;
- each school would be the center of outreach programs, so that as soon as a child is born, the family would be visited by a child development "visitor," helping to instill the kinds of motivation Sizer spoke of;
- we would have a school information or referral system for all family support, social, and child care services;
- each school would also have a health services component as part of its outreach system

This is not pie in the sky, Zigler insisted. In fact, such programs already exist, in various forms of experimentation and completeness, in more than 500 schools in about 30 states. Moreover, Zigler said, with these kinds of schools, "you would not lose school bond issues all over the country because schools will be supportive places that meet people's needs."

Questions to Dr. Zigler: Commissioner Doyle asked to what degree the child care systems in Europe were a concession to economic reality in terms of two-wage-earner households. Zigler believed that was true, but hastened to add that in Europe these places were seen as schools, not merely as child care institutions.

Commissioner Cross noted that the data on preschool programs raised questions about their effectiveness. Responding as one of the progenitors of both Head Start and Follow Through, Zigler admitted that "fade-out is real." But, he said, we have a lot of evidence that indicates the obvious: That you get better results from a good preschool program that interfaces with a good kindergarten than from either of those alone. He referred to the unwarranted prevalence of what he called the "inoculation model," i.e., the notion that once a child has a preschool program, "then he'll be forever wonderful and you won't have to do anything more." The way to think about a child, he insisted, is

developmentally, "and that at each stage, the child needs certain environmental nutrients if he is going to develop optimally."

Dr. Goldberg raised the criticism that laying all these responsibilities on the schools detracts from their central mission, which is to make it possible for students to learn. Zigler's response was simply that "these services are absolutely mandatory if children are going to learn....[without them] they're twice as likely to be on drugs, have more mental health problems," and so on. "If we could have the School of the 21st century, we could overcome the criticisms of Head Start and other programs that say we shouldn't be segregating kids on racial and socio-economic lines. We could have Head Start for every child." Right now, he said, we have a three-tier preschool system: the affluent are buying the best care; the next-best care goes to the poor; the worst care of all goes to the huge majority in the middle class and the lower middle class. Graham's response was couched in terms of the dilemma of the teacher faced with a hungry, dirty child whom she is supposed to teach how to read. The long-term need of the child is to learn phonics, but this need is overwhelmed by the needs of the short term.

Commissioner Shelton returned to Dr. Goldberg's issue: American education is being criticized today, he said, not because it isn't meeting children's developmental needs but because it is not meeting children's educational needs.

Zigler responded by suggesting that what was called for was not one system that does everything, but two *systems*, both using the school building as their headquarters to deliver both educational and health care/family support services. Solving the money issue will be hard, he admitted; the only way to make it happen is probably to charge parents for the services. There is also a body of evidence, he noted, pointing out that the more partnership you can get between parents and schools, the better the child does in school.

From the standpoint of secondary education, Commissioner Higgins asked whether moving in the direction of more individualized instruction, rather than by age levels, was as critical as the kinds of services being discussed at preschool and elementary levels. Graham believed this was true. What we need to figure out, she said, is how to teach a curriculum that is interesting, "engaging" in Sizer's terms, but also valuable in society's terms. These, she suggested, were issues of pedagogy, not just altering the curriculum.

Commissioner Doyle wondered if a prior suggestion by Commissioner Barrett, to render some 20% of the schools as "special or super or demonstration," and making them available by choice, could combat the anti-intellectual strain in American society spoken of by Graham. Graham demurred. "The danger of creating specialized schools is that only specialized kids will be eligible for them. I believe Macbeth is good for everyone." But the children getting short shrift, she said, are not those who will read Macbeth anyway, but children in middle class and lower middle class

neighborhoods who are getting not *Macbeth but worksheets, because it is thought they don't need* Macbeth. Commissioner Doyle wondered what policy remedies are available to create such schools, short of school choice programs.

Commissioner Jones returned to the issue of terminology. If you had it to do over again, he asked Zigler, would you try to move away from "child care" in the direction of the total scope of what the school can and should be doing in an extended time frame? "Yes," Zigler replied. "Words can murder you....I think we have to educate people that there is no real difference between child care and education." He made clear, however, that it was not his view that the school had to do everything. Some things, he said, can be done on a contracting model; it's just that someone has to be in charge—accountable.

Not a Time Problem But a Productivity Problem

The argument put to the Commissioners by Richard Elmore, professor of Education at Harvard, was that the schools do not have a time problem but a productivity problem, which had to be solved first. He defined the productivity problem as one of having the "knowledge and expertise to manage the resources of schooling."

"Time," he argued, "is a BIG resource in the sense that relatively small changes in its use can produce large changes in the system's aggregate costs." His own research, he said, indicated that a focus by schools on student performance attacked four "regularities" in schooling:

- how students are allocated to teachers;
- how content is allocated to time;
- how teachers relate to each other in their work; and
- how students' academic progress is assessed.

Once you attack one of these regularities, he said, you had to attack all four because if you don't, the system unravels.

A second finding from his research, he said, was that it was quite difficult to discern the point at which the school system, as an organization, begins to "come unstuck" and productivity begins to decline. Although he didn't think education should be run on a unit-cost basis in the business sense, Elmore noted that because we do not use such measuring sticks, our education system has an incentive problem: People don't have any good idea about how to use their time and knowledge effectively. As people wrestle with the "regularities," they lack a clear idea of how to frame the problem of what they're trying to accomplish. Two examples he cited were teachers' inability to deal with restructured time, and the disconnections between the regular school program and pull-outs

and activity pushed into an extended day format. Thus, a fundamental problem in dealing with time as a policy variable is teaching teachers and others how to use it productively.

From a productivity standpoint, Elmore said, "the main focus of the time debate, should be on student performance." Without that at the center, there is no yardstick to judge the productivity that comes from changing time. He concurred with Fuhrman that regulatory policy is a clumsy tool for solving problems in the input side of education; what are needed are "knowledge-intensive policies" that provide practitioners with incentives for learning new practices that can be tried and evaluated.

Discussion with Dr. Elmore: In response to an opening question from Commissioner Cross, Elmore said he believed the discussion about incentives for students was moving in the direction of attaching reasonable expectations to performance, with stakes attached to the expectations. The irony was, he said, that the stakes are highest for kids who get the most out of the system, and lowest for those who get the least. A study by one of his colleagues, Elmore related, was showing that parents know "frighteningly little about things like the courses you have to take to get into college." The implication was that they cannot participate effectively in assessing the stakes of their children's performance. The way to attack the problem, he believed, was "to jack up the stakes for institutions first, and then for the kids," but that it would take 15-20 years to do it.

Revisiting the issue of "mastery" in terms of requirements now being considered as part of an education reform bill in Massachusetts, Commissioner Barrett wondered whether the consequences of high stakes would be visited on children long before they were visited on adults. What, he asked were Elmore's thoughts on the imposition of mastery requirements on children: "If you set the bar high enough, will most manage to clear it?"

"The evidence," Elmore said, "is mixed," but dropout rates did decrease after the first round of imposed graduation requirements in Massachusetts. He warned, however, that if all education were "organized around the idea that every kid learns at a totally different rate by a totally different paradigm," it would be "the biggest cop-out" that teachers and administrators could use possibly use for not having high expectations. In fact, research by Andy Porter at Michigan State seems to show that the teachers most effective with diverse populations of children are those who take responsibility for their students' learning. "But," he cautioned, "we are not ready to translate such findings into policy." National standards, on the other hand, will be important in changing performance because they will have an effect on school culture. "The one message we need to get out is that it's not unfair to have high expectations for all kids."

In response to a question from Commissioner Doyle about the relationship between productivity and technology, and the lament of educators that they cannot afford to invest in technology, Elmore responded that for him, the most significant technology in schools was how

people are organized. The basic problem with educational technology is that schools never get past the point where a select few know how to use it; it never gets a chance to work. It's no good, he said, pointing to a few stunning examples and then moving on to the next innovation.

Responding to Dr. Goldberg's concluding query about the federal role, Elmore replied that he saw three dimensions in which the federal role was important: (1) keeping the standards discussion alive, (2) using federal programs like ESEA as demonstration laboratories for new ideas and establishing networks, and (3) sponsorship of activities like the New American Schools Development Corporation, which, he added, shouldn't be a private sector operation but a federal one. If the federal government doesn't do that, he said, it won't get done. "I really don't think the private sector will stay the course," he said.

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